UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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INTERIOR REPORTS 21 WHOOPING CRANES ON TEXAS REFUGE

Twenty-one whooping cranes have arrived at the Aransas National Wildlife
Refuge on the Gulf coast of Texas, the Department of the Interior reported today.

Of these, 19 were adults and two were this year's young. The cranes were sighted
by refuge personnel from observation posts at strategic points on the refuge.

The whooping crane, one of America's largest and rarest birds, nests in the Canadian wilds south of Great Slave Lake. It winters on and near the Aransas Refuge. This makes a migration route of 2,500 miles which the cranes negotiate spring and fall.

Last spring the entire wild flock of whoopers, 36 in all, departed from the wintering grounds and presumably headed north. Once on the wing the cranes are practically free from observation, although there are occasional reports along the migration route or from Canadian officials who patrol the huge nesting area to protect the birds. Canadians reported seeing four young cranes this year.

The cranes usually begin arriving at Aransas early in October. At times the last straggler reaches the wintering grounds in mid-December.

There are seven whoopers in captivity. Six are at the New Orleans zoo and one at the San Antonio zoo.

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